

## **DEFENSIBLE SPACE OVERVIEW AND REQUIREMENTS**

### Defensible Space, Definition:

The area within the perimeter of a parcel, development, neighborhood or community where basic wildland fire protection practices and measures are implemented, providing the key point of defense from an approaching wildfire or defense against encroaching wildfires or escaping structures fires. The perimeter as used in this definition is the area encompassing the parcel or parcels proposed for construction and or development, excluding the physical structure itself. The establishment and maintenance of emergency vehicle access, emergency water reserves, street names and building identification, and fuel modification measures characterize the area.

### Defensible space fuel modification.

This is an area where material capable of allowing a fire to spread unchecked has been treated, cleared or modified to slow the rate and intensity of an advancing fire and to create an area for fire suppression operations to occur.

Defensible space is required around all structures for any project.

Defensible space can be accomplished by:

- 1.) The removal of non-fire resistive vegetation and or;
- 2.) The application of ornamental fire resistive ground covers or vegetation.

Defensible Space requirements for projects include:

Defensible space shall be provided from any building for a distance of 100' to 200' or up to the property line when less than 200'. Distance shall be measured along the grade from the perimeter or projection of the building. Distance may be determined by a number of factors that may include; slope, topography, fuel types, and exposure to the wild land.

Ornamental vegetative fuels or cultivated ground covers shall be permitted within the designated defensible space area provided that they do not provide for a means of readily transmitting fire from the growth to any structure.

Trees shall be permitted within the defensible space provided that the horizontal distance between the crowns of adjacent trees and the crowns of fuel is not less than 10'. Deadwood and litter shall be regularly removed from trees.

Tree crowns extending to within 10' of any structure shall be pruned to maintain a minimum horizontal clearance of 10'. Tree crowns within the defensible space shall be pruned to remove limbs located less than 6' above the ground surface.

Any portion of tree crowns which extend to within 10' of the outlet of a chimney shall be pruned to maintain a minimum horizontal clearance of 10'.

Any person who owns, leases, controls, operates, or maintains any dwelling or structure in, upon, or adjoining any mountainous area, forest-covered land, brush-covered land, grass-covered land, or any land that is covered with flammable material, which area or land is within the City of Auburn shall at all times do all of the following:

**Trees.** Remove that portion of any tree that extends within 10 feet of the outlet of any chimney or stovepipe.

**Dead or Dying Wood.** Maintain any tree adjacent to or overhanging any building free of dead or dying wood.

**Vegetative Growth.** Maintain the roof of any structure free of leaves, needles, or other dead vegetative growth.

**Chimney and Stovepipe.** Provide and maintain at all times a screen over the outlet of every chimney or stovepipe that is attached to any fireplace, stove, or other device that burns any solid or liquid fuel. The screen shall be constructed of nonflammable material with openings of not more than one-half inch in size.

Chimneys serving fireplaces or decorative heating appliances in which solid or liquid fuel is used shall be provided with a spark arrester. Spark arresters constructed of woven or welded wire screening of 12 USA standard gauge wire shall have openings not exceeding ½ inch.

**Disposal of Flammable Vegetation and Fuels.** Disposal, including chipping, burying, burning or removal to a landfill site approved by the local jurisdiction, of flammable vegetation and fuels produced through fuel modification practices shall be performed.

Process:

Prior to issuance of building permits for any residential structure or building, the fire department shall review the proposed plans for compliance with applicable conditions and requirements for the project. Plans submitted are to indicate defensible space areas and what application will be used to create the defensible space. The fire department shall issue approval through the City of Auburn permit process prior to any construction. The fire department shall conduct any such required inspections prior to issuance of final occupancy for any permitted project. In addition, within allowable code enforcement, the fire department will have the ability to inspect for compliance of such defensibility requirements and enforce mitigation measures to ensure compliance at any time.